

Lenten Evening Prayer

Liturgical Texts & Prayers from the writings of

Julian of Norwich 1342-1416



Julian of Norwich is perhaps one of the greatest English Mystics. Although she has never been canonized by the Roman Catholic Church she is venerated in both the Lutheran and Anglican churches. Julian is the author of the first English book ever to have been written by a woman: **Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love**.

Julian of Norwich

Although Julian lived in a time of turmoil, her theology was optimistic, speaking of God's love in terms of joy and compassion as opposed to law and duty. For Julian, suffering was not a punishment that God inflicted, as was the common understanding. She believed that God loved and wanted to save everyone. Popular theology, magnified by current events including the Black Death and a series of peasant revolts, asserted that God was punishing the wicked. In response, Julian suggested a more merciful theology, which some say leaned towards universal salvation. She believed that behind the reality of hell is a greater mystery of God's love. In modern times, she has been classified as a proto-universalist, although she did not claim more than hope that all might be saved.

Although Julian's views were not typical, local authorities did not challenge either her theology or her authority because of her status as an anchoress. The lack of references to her work during her own time may indicate that religious authorities did not count her worthy of refuting, since she did not have much power as a woman.

Julian's theology was unique in three aspects: her view of sin, her belief that God is all love and no wrath, and her view of Christ as mother.

According to Julian, God is both our mother and our father. This idea was also developed by Francis of Assisi in the thirteenth century.

Similarly, Julian saw no wrath in God. She believed wrath existed only in humans but that God forgives us for this. She writes, "For I saw no wrath except on man's side, and He forgives that in us, for wrath is nothing else but a perversity and an opposition to peace and to love".

Lenten Evening Prayer

*As you enter, please take a nut from the bowl.
It was in a small round hazelnut that Julian saw all of creation.*

As I was seeing the vision of Christ's bleeding head, he gave me a
Spiritual insight into his comforting love.

Christ is everything we need –
Christ is our clothing,
wrapping us in love
Christ embraces us,
shelters us,
surrounds us
with tender love.
Christ will never desert us!

And then Christ showed me a tiny, round thing. It was about the size
of a hazelnut, which I held in the palm of my hand. And I wondered,
"What might this be? How can this last? It is so tiny, it could just fade into
nothing!"

This is the answer that came to me.

"In this small thing is all of creation!
It lasts
and it always will last
because God loves it.
In this way
all creation lasts
because
God made it,
God cares for it,
God loves it."

*Please begin your worship in quiet contemplation
of all that God has made.*

Invocation:

P: It is part of our human nature to desire God, and it is part of God's nature to desire us.

C: We can never stop yearning for God until we are possessed by God in the fullness of love.

(Julian: Revelations of Love)

Evening Hymn: **#561 Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory**

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

P: God is all that is good, and God made all that is made, and God loves every part of it.

If you love all people because of God's love, then you love each created thing, because you love the creator.

For God is in every person, and every person is in God. If you love in this way, you love all. **C: Amen.**

(Julian: Revelations of Love)

Psalmody: **#232 Let My Prayer Rise Up**

the piano side is Group 1 and the north side Group 2

Silence for reflection

Prayer:

P: "All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well."

C: "Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing frighten you. Everything passes away except God."

P: "If there is anywhere on earth a lover of God who is always kept safe, I know nothing of it, for it was not shown to me. But this was shown: that in falling and rising again we are always kept in that same precious love."

C: "Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing frighten you. Everything passes away except God."

P: It is God's purpose that we be delighted--that we enjoy the gift of wholeness--that we be comforted and strengthened through grace.

C: **We are God's happiness and delight.
And God is our happiness and delight.**

(Julian: Revelations of Love)

Silence for reflection

Hymn: ***#565 All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night***

Scripture Reading: 1 John: 4:7-9; 12

Beloved, let us love one another because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten of God and has knowledge of God. Those who do not love have known nothing of God, for God is love. God's love was revealed in our midst in this way: by sending the Only Begotten into the world, that we might have faith through the Anointed One.

No one has ever seen God. Yet if we love one another, God dwells in us, and God's love is brought to perfection in us.

A Reading from Julian of Norwich:

Revelations of Love, Chapter 15:

I saw that God took great, spiritual delight in my soul. Because of that, I felt so strong, so spiritual that I was completely at ease.

My laughter and delight only lasted for a short while. Then I found myself changed. I felt abandoned. Depressed. Weary of life. But after a while, God gave me comfort again, so that I felt no fear, no depression, no physical or spiritual pain.

When I was feeling joy, I could have said with Saint Paul, “Nothing can separate me from the love of Christ.” When I was depressed I could have said with Saint Peter, “Lord, save me. I am dying.”

I knew joy one moment and pain the next. I was given this experience for a reason. Sometimes God leaves us on our own for the good of our soul. Sometimes God brings us joy and sometimes pain, but both are one love. Joy lasts, but pain is passing. God doesn’t want us to feel pain, but wants us to pass right by that pain and live in God’s endless love.

Revelations of Love, Chapter 26:

Again, our Lord showed himself to me, this time more glorious than I had seen him before. I learned that our soul will never find rest until it comes to the fullness of Christ’s joy.

So Christ said, again and again,

“I AM the one.

I AM the one.

I AM the one most honoured.

I AM the one you love.

I AM the one you enjoy.

I AM the one you serve.

I AM the one you long for.

I AM the one you desire.

I AM the one you yearn for.

I AM the one who is everything.

I AM the one whom the holy church preaches and teaches.

I AM the one who showed myself to you.”

There were so many words, I couldn’t understand them all. But the joy I had in listening to those words went far beyond anything I could think or desire. I won’t try to explain them, but, as the grace of God gives you love and understanding, you will know what God means.

Hymn: **#735 Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth**

(Hymn text inspired by Julian)

Prayers of the Body

We will begin our prayers by singing # 751 three times
please change the singular pronouns to plural:

**#751 O Lord, Hear Our Prayers
When We Call Answer Us**

Prayer petitions will be punctuated by silence.

Following the Amen, please sing the alternate verse of
#751 "The Lord is our song"

Abba Prayer

P: As Jesus taught us, we pray:

**Heavenly Mother, Heavenly Father
Holy and blessed is your true name.
We pray for your reign of peace to come.
We pray that your good will be done.
Let heaven and earth become one.
Give us this day the bread we need.
Give it to those who have none.
Let forgiveness flow like a river between us
From each one to each one to each one.
Lead us to holy innocence
Beyond the evil of our days:
Come swiftly Mother, Father, come.
For yours is the power
And the mercy, and the glory.
Forever your name is all one. Amen.**

Hymn: **#569 The Day You Gave Us, Lord Has Ended**

Benediction:

P: Let our God of Goodness be enough for you.
Ask for nothing less,
for if you ask for less than God
you will always be left wanting.

In God:

All shall be well
and all shall be well
and all manner of things shall be well.

(Julian: Revelations of Love)

Peace:

*receive the peace of Christ
and share Christ's peace as you depart.*

